

# Christianity and Crisis

*A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion*

VOL. IX, No. 19

NOVEMBER 14, 1949

\$2.00 per year; 10 cents per copy

## A Positive Policy for Asia

FIVE months ago in this column under the caption "The Struggle for China," we examined the possibilities for American policy in China in view of the imminent Communist triumph.

The intervening months have confirmed the somber forecasts then made. Virtually the whole of continental China is now in Communist hands; the best informed observers believe that Formosa and Hong Kong could be taken within a matter of weeks, although shrewd strategy may counsel no direct attempt upon Hong Kong.

In the meantime, State Department statements have been occupied with justifying American policy in the past. Thus far, they have offered no illumination on a policy for the future. Failure to bring forth even the first outlines of a new policy for the new situation encourages the widespread belief that the United States will continue to follow a course characterized by uncertainty, indecision, and vacillation. In any event, there is little which we should do, or can do, with respect to China at the present moment. The initiative has passed to its new rulers.

The essential point to be recognized is that, with the conquest of China, the whole problem has shifted its focus. The main question for the future is not, what can we do about China? but, what will we do about Asia, an Asia whose most populous and powerful nation, the strategic pivot of the continent, is now a dynamo of triumphant, confident and expansive revolution?

As a matter of fact, that has always been the true focus of the Far Eastern problem. America's traditional friendship for the Chinese people, our concern for their welfare and their future, as well as China's pivotal centrality in Asia, have consistently tended to narrow the focus, isolate China from the larger context, and thus distort perspective. In the perspective of American interest, the significance of China's internal conflict lay not primarily in its meaning for her people but in its influence upon the whole of Asia, and thereby upon the wider world struggle. It is high time that attention be broadened to embrace that larger focus and that Ameri-

can policy in the Far East, toward China as well as toward her neighbors, be determined accordingly.

Three alternatives present themselves: 1) withdrawal of American leadership, especially from Korea and Japan; 2) continuation of self-defeating vacillation; 3) the development and implementation of a positive program.

The first fact to be faced is that we are currently losing the struggle for Asia, as we were losing the struggle for Europe before the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine and the initiation of the Marshall Plan, and for essentially the same reasons. Communism continues to gain ground in India, Burma, Indo-China, Japan, Korea, and probably to a lesser degree elsewhere. Its advance cannot fail to enjoy enormous acceleration through the prestige of victory in China and its operation henceforth from a free and dynamic indigenous base. To withdraw from East Asia now or to perpetuate the policy of drift is to surrender Japan and Korea to Communism. And then, how long will the Philippines, Indonesia and India be able to withstand the seemingly irresistible "wave of the future"?

But is there a constructive alternative? There is, but it demands clear definition and bold and costly execution. It must start from the recognition that all Asia is in revolution, that the deep motivation of the masses is not Communist but nationalist, and that these aspirations parallel those of our own Republic in the days of its birth and therefore claim the wholehearted support of true Americans. There is no hope of halting the Communization of Asia unless the initiative of revolution be wrested from Moscow, and the United States establish its rightful role as champion and sustainer of independence, self-determination and self-realization for every yearning Asian people. But that role cannot be fulfilled through mouthing of ancient catchwords, or through invitation to emulate our present American way of life, but only through sincere profession of confidence in their future made both convincing and effective by action, by bountiful generosity and by unconditional and costly support.

There are three nations in Asia to which such a policy can be anchored—India, Indonesia, the Philippines—each newly come to freedom, each presently resisting Communist infiltration with determination, each needing material and moral support which only the United States can furnish. It is to them rather than to ourselves that we should point their neighbors as illustrations of the path along which we would assist all Asia.

However, the possibility of guarding the rest of Asia against Communist infiltration, intrigue and ultimate subjugation depends, in the immediate future, upon American policy in northeast rather than southeast Asia. It must be frankly faced that neither Korea nor Japan at present possesses either adequate military strength or sufficient democratic resilience to safeguard its independence; and that, as suggested above, to resign Japan and Korea to Communism is, in all probability, to lose the struggle for Asia. With respect to them, therefore, our policy should be to continue active support of their defense against the subjugation they fear until they likewise can develop healthy and self-reliant nationhood and become additional firm anchors for the bastion of the new democracy in a new Asia. Such a policy even offers larger hope for the ultimate inclusion of China within a democratic Asia than any alternative either of hostility or of collaboration.

But such a policy cannot be implemented without boldness, integrity, consistency and generosity. It requires that American economic operations in Asia be controlled not by private quest for profits (though there is doubtless an important place for private investment geared to the larger aim), but by public resolve to help. It presupposes assistance from American resources on a large scale. And it demands unequivocal assurance to the peoples of Asia that we are prepared to support their resistance to Communist ingression and intrigue.

In these respects, it could follow closely our remarkably effective policy in Western Europe. While the area is vaster and the problems even more complex than in Europe, the native resources to maintain the accustomed standards of living are, relatively, far greater. And, with the exception of Japan, the area suffers far less acutely from war devastation. Moreover, there is an immeasurable source of strength wholly lacking in Europe—the virile dynamism of nations coming to birth and ready to find their strongest ally in a nation which was born of similar dreams and is now bent on helping them bring their dreams to fulfillment. We shall not be engaged in bolstering aged structures crumbling from internal decay as well as external attack, but rather in supporting youthful organisms

against alien infections which would blight their vigor in the hour of its largest promise.

Here is a task to test to the utmost limit American wisdom and skill and the sincerity of American profession of concern for other peoples. The risks are great and the stakes momentous. There is even a possibility that, in accordance with the Scriptural principle of bread cast upon the waters, a byproduct might be the reintroduction into our limping democracy of some of the elements of its original genius and power.—H.P.V.D.

### Christian Educator Gets Soviet Hearing

A nineteenth century Russian educator who, while rejecting the prevailing clericalism of his time, believed that "the sole ideal of perfection . . . was the Christian ideal of life," has rather unexpectedly been given a hearing by the USSR educational periodical "Sovetskaya Paedagogika" which is publishing his "selected works."

K. D. Ushinsky, whose long-forgotten works on "fundamental problems of Russian education" have already appeared in their third edition in Leningrad, was among the advocates of Christian principles "in the period of transition from the feudal monarchy to the bourgeois (1824-77). The specifically Christian aspect of his thoughts is fully brought out in the new editions of his works, and also in the numerous articles which have appeared concerning him. The preface to the last volume does, it is true, contain an official statement to the effect that certain influences of his day are reflected in his educational views which are today to some extent unacceptable to Soviet philosophy. It is, for instance, stated that "instruction in the catechism in school curricula" must continue to be regarded as "detrimental to the study of the natural sciences."

Ushinsky's views on education are, however, otherwise treated as being virtually those of a genuine popular educator; indeed, according to a statement by Mr. Kalinin, "they can only be put into operation under our Socialist order." Even though Ushinsky "has not fully explored the subject" in his evaluation of the natural sciences, his writings "have nevertheless a strong claim on the attention of Soviet education experts."

Ushinsky is then quoted as saying: "Only religion, which solves the problems of the world in the hearts of men, and science, in its final, selfless, philosophical interpretation, are purveying the necessary nourishment to the immortal spirit of man in the world."

With regard to "the principles of Russian education," it is added, "the time is perhaps no longer very distant when every educated foreigner will enter into the ancient and reverend temple of Christianity as it has been maintained in the East."—*Ecumenical Press Service, Geneva.*

# Religion in Our College Generations

CHARLES W. GILKEY

**T**HIRTY-NINE years ago next month I was ordained to the Christian ministry, and began my first pastorate in the next block to the University of Chicago. Little did I dream, as I walked the streets of the Windy City for the first time, that I should spend my entire active ministry of thirty-seven years not only in that city, but in that same neighborhood: eighteen years as minister of the Hyde Park Baptist Church, and nineteen years as Dean of the University Chapel. In both capacities I lived and worked at close quarters—counting four years to a student generation—with nine successive generations of Chicago students.

As I became more familiar with their religious problems, I began to be invited as a visitor to other campuses; so that in the last thirty years I have thus visited colleges and universities all the way from Maine to Texas, and from Florida to the State of Washington. It is now just 50 years since I myself entered college as a freshman.

The editors of *CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS* have been interested in an attempt to gather up in this article something of what I have made out to be the mind of the younger generation, more especially as it has shown itself in the religious life of the American campus during the last half-century. I have accepted their invitation with the understanding that I am writing not primarily as a teacher, certainly not as a psychologist or a sociologist, but definitely as a Christian minister who has throughout carried responsibility for a church or a college chapel in the local community. I am not undertaking to speak *for* the younger generation: fortunately, more and more it speaks for itself.

One of the most frequent but most natural fallacies in all attempts at the understanding of the younger generation on the part of their elders, is that which leads alumni to assume that students of today still think and feel about life in general as they themselves did when they were in college. This fallacy is by no means unknown among college faculties, who, though living and working on the campus, sometimes lack contact with the minds of their students outside the areas in which they teach. We still have with us some professors who in their classrooms take pot-shots at religion on the assumption that the small-town sectarianism or the rigid dogmatism with which they grew up and against which they then revolted, is still the thinking of the entire Christian church of today—with the progress and the various schools of which they have never since bothered to keep in touch. Likewise profes-

sors eminent in their own specialties easily assume that students of today are as indifferent to religious questions and needs as they were in their youth; little realizing, through lack of contacts *in that area*, the sense of bewildered wistfulness and spiritual need in the minds and hearts of a student generation that has been growing up in a much more difficult and uncertain world than theirs was in what Henry Seidel Canby has called "the age of confidence." Student attitudes and needs change as "times change" and "opinions vary to their opposite"—as Stevenson put it in "*Virginibus Puerisque*" almost seventy years ago; and all generalizations about the younger generation have to reckon with this swinging pendulum, as it has been pushed further and faster by the crises through which the last thirty-five years have carried us all.

Are there then any common characteristics amid these changes in the mind of youth, that seem to hold as a rule, whatever the direction in which the swing may at the moment be moving? I well remember a discerning remark perhaps ten years ago by one of the younger Federated Theological Faculty (as we call it now at Chicago), after he had been leading a religious discussion group among our own University students—who are widely regarded, not least perhaps by our own academic officials and faculty, as a highly selected and therefore an unusually emancipated and very mature lot. He was surprised to find how many of them were still in vigorous and typically adolescent revolt: against the competitive small-town sectarianism of the communities in which many of them had grown up; against the rigid or at least the provincial theology that many felt had been imposed upon them; against a parish ministry of "private chaplains cooperatively sustained," that seemed to them content to "sit in the stand and explain the game to the ladies."

My colleague's remark took me straight back to some of the half-forgotten but then sharpest reactions of my own youth. I had once supposed that no younger generation ever had quite so much justification for revolt against its own religious upbringing, as did my own. But now I began dimly to recall (how strangely hard it is in the fifties to remember what it felt like long ago to be in the 'teens) certain periods when I felt sure that everything was wonderful in the homes of my pals, but that nothing whatever was quite right in the home to which I know now very well that I owe a great deal of what has proved most valuable in my own later life. And I certainly remember the



days in our children's 'teens when they were equally sure that things weren't at all what they should be in the home in which they were growing up—but only in the homes of their school-mates up and down the street!

Is not this adolescent reaction against one's own upbringing a normal and indeed inevitable part of the process by which every generation grows up into individuality and maturity? And does it not hold within itself the possibility, at least, that the rising generation may turn out a bit better than their fathers, and do a bit better job at rearing their own children? Likewise the hope that the *status quo*, which youth, like the Negro preacher, always feels to be "a debbil of a fix," can, in their time, be left behind by at least a step or two of progress? And is not that hope and faith an important part of the perennial spiritual birthright of youth, "endowed by the Creator" with a creative urge which makes every generation unwilling simply to follow in its predecessors' footsteps, and eager to blaze its own new trails—even though it find them by trial and error?

Our professor of educational psychology was discussing with a student group one Sunday evening some widely-read recent books on the theory and practice of higher education, and suddenly remarked that there was hardly mention in any of them of the two problems that bulked largest in the lives and anxieties of the students who came to him for personal conference: first and foremost their relation to their parents and homes, and second, their relations with the other sex. This is likewise the frequent experience of religious counsellors on the American campus: they find students far more frequently concerned about these two relationships (and often in that same order of importance) than about their "religious perplexities."

In my own undergraduate days at Harvard, at the turn of the century and in the hey-day of the elective system, religion was regarded by most of my contemporaries as very much of an elective in the school of life; taken, like the classics, chiefly by a few serious and often rather queer souls who were welcome to it if they felt they wanted or needed it. But even before World War II the tide had begun to turn. In the middle 1930's I asked a young assistant with many undergraduate contacts, "How are the best men here thinking these days about religion?" "Ten years ago," he answered, "the best of them were saying with a self-assured shrug of the shoulders, 'Religion? . . . Nothing to it!' Today our best men are asking, a bit wistfully and very seriously, 'Religion? . . . What is there in it?'" And when in 1948 Professor G. W. Allport, chairman of the department of psychology at Harvard, published in the *Journal of Psychology*

his report on "The Religion of the Post-War Student," based on a study of 414 Harvard and 86 Radcliffe students who were "an accurate cross-section" of the two undergraduate bodies, he found that seven out of every ten of them felt the need for "some form of religious orientation or belief," and that their college teaching had given them little help toward "a mature system of rational theology." They were less troubled than their predecessors had been about the much-discussed conflict between religion and science, but much more disturbed by "the failure of institutional religion to prevent war or lessen human misery."

Similar changes in student attitudes toward religion between the two world wars have been apparent on many, if not most, American campuses, and were well under way before World War II began. At Chicago I used to be told, when we were starting a Sunday evening discussion group in our home about 1930, that our students were keen about social and international problems, but that "nobody was interested in religion." Within ten years, when there were three such groups in as many faculty homes, the one that was concerned with such central religious issues as prayer and God and immortality, would often be larger than the other two put together that were considering social questions—and would usually last twice as long. When our Chapel was dedicated in 1928, hardly a prominent undergraduate would let himself be seen taking any public part in its program: but fifteen years later there was a waiting list of volunteers glad and indeed proud to read the Scripture lesson, as one of them did each Sunday morning; and the choral singing and the ushering were all done by volunteers interested in the Chapel services, instead of for pay as in the days of their predecessors. Meanwhile the proportion of students in the Sunday congregation was steadily increasing, and was probably larger than ever before in the history of the University. John R. Mott has often said publicly that he entered Cornell in the 1880's expecting there to escape the influences of religion: but ever since the 1930's his *alma mater* has given her visiting preachers one of the largest and most attentive student congregations in America, and her well-known organized religious program is presently to receive from one of Cornell's most distinguished benefactors a new headquarters such as few American universities possess, in the very center of the campus.

These changes have, of course, reflected the changing mood of our entire generation as it moved out of the "age of confidence" before 1914, and on through World War I into the age of insecurity and anxiety that was accentuated by the Great Depression after 1928, and has continued ever since. But it should be emphasized that the turn of the

spiritual tide on many, if not most, campuses had begun well before World War II; and that these changes were produced, not only by the impact of a succession of social crises on the mind and heart of the younger generation, but also by its own inner reaction against the complacencies and over-confidence of its predecessors, and by its own meagre spiritual equipment for the issues and the prospects it has had to face. In the early 1930's a graduate student at Chicago, who is now President of one of the best-known small colleges in the land, remarked in a faculty-student committee appointed to select the University preachers for the coming year: "Our students want to hear in Chapel men who can tell us what is *wrong* with our civilization and with our social order."

It is a significant paradox that while thoughtful opinion among Christian students has, in the last twenty-five years, moved steadily to the *left* on social issues, and has taken these issues (especially race relations) with a seriousness and a personal concern that their predecessors of my own student days could match neither in knowledge of the facts nor in conscience about them; their theological thinking, on the other hand, has, within the last few years, turned definitely toward the *right*. On this point the observation of many workers with students in other parts of the country would sense a theological tendency different from that reported from Cambridge by the Allport study there. Involved in this swing of the pendulum is a very definite reaction against the vagueness of content and lack of vital conviction in the theological liberalism in which so many present-day students have been reared both at home and at school. Faculty professors of my generation sometimes find themselves puzzled by the theological conservatism of their children. Talking recently with a very thoughtful young woman ten years out of college about Dorothy Sayers' "Creed or Chaos," I was maintaining that to liberals of my generation that very title seemed a false dilemma; that every generation has to rethink and restate its Christian convictions in its own language, even though it may keep the older creeds, not as intellectual rails to run on, so much as banners from by-gone battles that it is proud to march under—like the great hymns of the Christian Church Universal. She replied that one reason why Miss Sayers' point of view has such a hearing among the younger generation is because its definiteness in a time of groping confusion comes as such a welcome relief amid the lack of positive religious convictions and the haziness of belief in which she and so many of her contemporaries have grown up. My own generation may find it as hard to understand this hunger for definiteness and dynamic in Christian faith on the part of our children, as they for their part may find it not easy to

realize the struggle we went through to win the freedom from Biblical literalism and from theological rigidity, and the conviction of the contemporary relevance of the Christian social gospel—all of which our children have inherited and now take for granted. In their anxiety and uncertainty about their own and our common human future, our children listen to the emphasis of neo-orthodoxy on the frailty and sinfulness of human nature, with an open ear and a responsive conscience which our older generation, that had to fight other battles and bears other scars, may find both puzzling and disconcerting. So every generation reacts against the limitations and blind spots in its own up-bringing, and likewise easily undervalues the worth or the cost of the gains its fathers had to fight to win.

The last student generation with whom I lived and worked in Chicago was the most serious-minded of the twelve I have personally known. It took its responsibilities in the critical present and for the unknown future with a soul-searching intensity that made my own light-hearted contemporaries of forty years ago seem almost like carefree butterflies in comparison. I was deeply impressed by its concentration on the weightier issues of religion and of human destiny. It is years now since I have found in student question-boxes the old queries about the virgin birth and the miracles and the physical resurrection that used to bulk so large among the religious perplexities of our youth. But this generation faces with eager persistence the central issues of Christian faith: about God and His purposes for human history and destiny, about the relevance of Jesus to our modern life and its deeper needs, about the perennial human sins of prejudice and pride and complacency and irresponsibility, about prayer and immortality. Such a generation "has the makings" of the more creative Christianity and the more dynamic church that the years ahead so sorely need.

But we must not expect to find material of this quality delivered to our hand in large quantities all at once. It takes *time* to develop the trees that bear the best fruit—and some years they bear very little. Jesus' familiar parable of the grain of mustard seed that grew into a great tree contains no hint that this happened over night. And workers with students, who year after year cast their seed, not so much into a fallow field, as from their post on the bank into the swiftly moving stream of youth that passes presently out of their sight before they can see what happens to the seed, have even more reason than their brother ministers who work in churches with efficient organization and swelling statistics of visible results, to understand that insight of Habakkuk that kept him steady in a time that was not prosperous, and could not point to impressive results: "The righteous shall live by his faith." A

ministry to the younger generation will always work "by faith, not by sight."

But it also has one reassurance that is both contemporary and characteristic for our own post-war time. We usually think of our newborn hope of the ecumenical church—for many of us God's best gift to our own storm-tossed generation—chiefly in its inter-racial and inter-class aspect: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew . . . Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." But it is equally a church which includes what the Book of Common Prayer beautifully calls "the blessed company of all faithful people," and the Apostles' Creed "the communion of saints"; not only Augustine and Francis, Luther and Wesley and Brooks, but "young men and maidens, old men and children," in one "household of faith." Within its inclusive fellowship there will be room and scope, not only for the ripe wisdom and rich harvests of age, but for the courage and conscience and adventurousness of youth, in its potentialities as well as its immaturities, under the guidance and blessing of the God Who is "our dwelling-place in all generations."

## Communications:

Dear Sir:

Professor Bennett's editorial on the atomic bomb seems to me generally sound, but I would like to comment on two points.

First, he says that the new situation will make it necessary for the majority "to find a new approach that does not presuppose American monopoly of the bomb." Perhaps it will alter the method of negotiations, or the details of the transition from national to international control, if the Atomic Energy Commission ever gets to that stage of discussion, but I doubt that the breaking of the U. S. atomic monopoly will in any way affect the fundamentals of the majority control plan. That plan is based, in my judgment, not upon American monopoly of the bomb, but upon the presupposition that *more than one state would soon have it*, with a resulting catastrophic competition. The Soviet bomb makes an effective control system more urgent, and probably more difficult to achieve, but it does not change the basic technical requirements of such a system.

Further, he states that the "next aim of American policy must be to come to an agreement through the U.N. that will reduce the danger of atomic war." If he means that the U. S. and other members of the majority group should continue to urge acceptance of the plan of control which has been evolved to reduce this danger, I quite agree. If he means, however, that the U. S. should now advocate a modified plan of control without adequate inspection, or simple outlawry without control, this is another thing. The judgment of the U.N. majority that a watered-down plan of control would be worse than useless seems to me correct. An ineffective control system would increase friction with-

out increasing security—or result in new peril through a false sense of security. Likewise, outlawry without inspection or control would be a very poor substitute for an effective control system. We dare not abandon the admittedly slim hope of trustworthy controls, since nothing else offers any real promise of security.

Secondly, he says we should "make it clear that we will never again use the bomb unless we are first attacked by the bomb." This was first urged in March, 1946 by the Commission of Christian Scholars, of which Professor Bennett was secretary, in the hope of developing a "better state of international confidence" favorable to negotiations for international control. It is ironic that the first statement by a public official in favor of a unilateral declaration of this nature came upon the heels of President Truman's announcement about the Soviet atomic explosion. I fear that a unilateral declaration now would be robbed of much of its value, since it would widely be attributed to fear rather than moral conviction. Walter Lippmann's idea of a multilateral agreement barring the use of atomic weapons except in retaliation might be preferable under the circumstances and politically more possible, but is open to the objection stated above regarding outlawry without inspection or control.

On the other hand, we in the churches have a heavy obligation to keep the consciences of our people and government leaders sensitive to the moral implications of strategic bombing in general, and the use of weapons of mass destruction in particular. We dare not, by our silence permit unquestioned acquiescence in the new modes of warfare as reconcilable with Christian principles. Our church leaders, through a suitable memorial or personal consultations, should make clear to the government their deep concern over strategic concepts now current. This, at least, is our duty.

RICHARD M. FAGLEY.

New York, New York.

Dear Sir:

Dr. Bennett's article in the October 17 issue raises some important questions. He contends that "except for Christians who identify Christianity with pacifism there seems to be no clear Christian answer" to the problem of the atomic bomb. It is, on the one hand, the Christian's responsibility to try to prevent a third world war and at the same time to strive to prevent the atomic bomb from being used in the extension of totalitarianism. "How these two obligations are to be reconciled in terms of a particular policy is a matter of judgment concerning which we simply do not have any clear guidance from Christian teaching."

The inference which has to be drawn from this seems to me to be that Christian teaching has nothing to say about the means the Christian or the state is permitted to use even in pursuit of the "highest ends." But there is a historic doctrine of the "just war" and teaching about permissible means is a part of it, as the Calhoun Commission of Theologians in the report on *Atomic War and the Christian Faith*, of which I believe Dr. Bennett was a member, pointed out. In the light of that teaching this report stated that neither the atomic bombings of World War II nor obliteration bombing with



other weapons could be justified on Christian grounds and that they constituted "a sin against God and against the people of Japan."

Does Dr. Bennett now reject this teaching? If it was something in the circumstances under which these bombings were carried out which outlawed them on Christian grounds, what were those circumstances and what conceivable circumstances in another war would be "better" so that the use of atomic bombs might be justified? Does he have in mind that if Russia e.g. used atomic bombs first it might then be justifiable for the United States, because it started a split-second later than "the aggressor," to "retaliate" in the degree that the Allies "retaliated" for the German bombing attacks? Would this bomb-for-a-bomb, or more accurately, ten-bombs-for-a-bomb pattern, come within actions permissible according to Christian teaching? I am not raising here the question whether the proposal that the United States agree not to use the bomb first is politically realistic. I don't believe it is because I don't think that any political or military leader would be guided by it, or, to put it another way, would fail to find evidence that "the aggressor" had begun an atomic attack, in the atmosphere of super-tension bound to prevail at the climax of an atomic armaments race. Even if this question is waived, the other questions, it seems to me, clearly arise.

A. J. MUSTE

New York, New York

I fully agree with Mr. Fagley's warning against any watering down of the essential controls and safeguards in the plan of the U. N. majority. My chief concern is to emphasize the conviction that reliance on a balance of atomic power is a second best and that it is only defensible if we continue in each new situation to leave no stone unturned to discover a basis for agreement on a plan for effective international control. I agree that outlawry without inspection or control would only hide the problem and prevent us from seeking a real solution.

On the point of a unilateral assurance to the world that this country would never be the first to use the bomb, I seem to be somewhere between Mr. Fagley and Mr. Muste. Mr. Fagley reminds us of the following statement of the Calhoun Commission which reported to the Federal Council of Churches in March, 1946: "We urge that the churches call upon the government of the United States to affirm publicly, with suitable guaranties, that it will under no circumstances be the first to use atomic weapons in any possible future war." The Commission did disapprove of the use of the atomic bomb on Japan and the practice of obliteration bombing that was an important part of our strategy in both Europe and Asia. The non-pacifist members of the Commission did not commit themselves to the absolute repudiation of such methods of warfare in the future. They believed that if any one power or group of powers were to take that position, they would in some circumstances invite atomic attack. Reluctantly they concluded that "if plans for international control of aggression should fail, the only effective restraint upon would-be aggressors might be fear of reprisals, and that this

possible restraint should not be removed in advance."

Mr. Muste underlines the bitterest ethical problem that any Christian faces today. It is not possible to draw an absolute line in advance between what is permissible and what is ruled out in some future war. Nevertheless, there is nothing "Christian" about any of these methods of total war. If the possibility of their being used in reprisal is the best assurance in some situations that they will not be used in the first place, a Christian may regard it as his duty to be in a position to use them. To repudiate the possibility of their use in advance may give more moral satisfaction, but it may also mean that those who do so would share responsibility for any atomic war that was begun because some power believed it could do so without too great risk.

When anyone asks if it would be "Christian" to use the atomic bomb in reprisal, the question should be asked in reply, would it be Christian to neglect the one method that seems to have any promise in preventing an atomic war? Whether or not it would have that effect, is a matter of judgment on which Christians can expect to differ. Both Mr. Muste and *The Christian Century* appear to think that there is something in the Christian gospel that should be able to settle that question of judgment. If only there were!

My suggestion, following that of the Commission in 1946, seems to me to be the only possible way of drawing any moral line at all. At least we could make an effort to assure the world that no nation need fear that we would first use the bomb in peace or in war. There are complications here that need to be faced. Would any devastating attack, with or without atomic weapons, perhaps with germs, release us from such a pledge? That question shows how difficult any legalistic efforts to anticipate future decisions really are. And yet, I think we should define a position here where we can take a stand and not allow ourselves to slide into the most convenient decision under the dictates of someone's idea of military necessity.

The full bitterness of this problem is seen when we realize that, while the prospect of the use of the bomb in reprisal might, in the short run at least, prevent atomic war, its actual use and the launching of a two-way atomic war would probably result in the destruction of the things we wanted to preserve. In the particular cleavage in the world between the Communist and the non-Communist orbits, this is of special importance. Nothing could be more self-defeating than the attempt to prevent the spread of Communism by such weapons. Mr. Hanson W. Baldwin is surely among the prophets when he writes in the *New York Times*: "If we want to produce a more stable peace, if we want to eliminate Russia's power for aggression and minimize the ideological threat of Communism, the promiscuous blasting of cities and the killing and maiming of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children is scarcely the way to accomplish our ends." (May 22, 1949) However difficult it may be to chart in advance the absolutely right course for all Christians to choose, Mr. Baldwin's words express a truth that should guide the minds of those who do determine our national policy and it will be a function of the church to keep reminding them of it.—JOHN C. BENNETT

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A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion  
537 West 121st St., New York 27, N. Y.

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## We Are Not Against the East!

KARL BARTH

Reprint from *Die Wahrheit* (Graz), April 17, 1949

The warmongers want to produce anxiety, fear and panic terror by asserting that the Soviet Union is planning an attack on the peoples of Europe. This anxiety must in no case be our counsellor. We must have no part in this East-West antagonism! It in no way concerns us as Christians. We can only warn against the even greater crime of wishing to convert this conflict into a third world war. We can only advocate any easing of this tension. Influence from America is strong and we must take care that we do not regard our Western judgment as being unquestionably the right, the Christian judgment. The church is not identical with the West. The Western conscience is not necessarily also the Christian conscience. A fatal, banal propaganda of hatred is continually seeking to equate the socialism which has become a reality in the East with fascism. As a scientist and theologian I must hold clear concepts. History does not repeat itself so simply. There are numerous

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contemporaries and fellow Christians who at one time were not so unwilling to see Brown because Brown was so fiercely against Red. We must also reject those who, like certain circles of the Allied Military Government in Germany today, consider it right to play off newly-awakened national instincts of certain Germans against the Russians. I must here also point to Franco-Spain and to Imperialist Holland's war in Indonesia.

The slogan "Against the East" is not altogether honest. And therefore we must refuse to let it come from our lips. We must demand that people see exactly what is positively meant and intended. There is no sense whatever in even wanting for a moment to mention in the same breath Marxism and the ideas of the Third Reich, to name a man of the stature of Joseph Stalin with such charlatans as Hitler, Goering, Himmler, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, Streicher and the others. I have sharply condemned certain events which have taken place in the Soviet Union, but nevertheless the Soviet Union represents a constructive idea, the solution of a question which for us too is a serious and burning question—the social question.

So long as there is still "freedom" in the West to engineer economic crises, "freedom" to dump corn into the sea when elsewhere people are starving, it is not for us, at any rate as Christians, to hurl an absolute "No" at the East.

Communism has never made the least attempt to give another interpretation to or falsify Christianity, or to deck itself in a Christian garb. It has never been guilty of that wicked crime—anti-semitism. It is not anti-Christian. I must demand of the church something else than godless political calls to battle. What right have we then to speak of a Christian West and seek to come to its aid in a spiritual, political and eventually in a military crusade? What fools or hypocrites must we indeed be if we would stoop to such a thing.

Christians must take part in social reconstruction. For today it is not a question of struggle in the military sense but of reconstruction. That is the fundamental idea for which we as Christians must stand in the present political world.

From here it is not easy to realize in what sense and to what extent serious, solid and promising reconstruction work is being conducted over there in the East. Let us see to it that with us in the West that is the sole and only question. If that is the case with us then we in the West have nothing to fear from the East. But if that is not the case, then, no doubt, there exists reason for anxiety.

We must refuse to allow Christianity to be harnessed to the anti-Soviet incitement of big-business. We must refuse to adopt a hostile attitude to the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. We must refuse to engage in a frantic struggle for the maintenance of the privileges of big business by representing it as "defence of Christianity". We must demand that we in the West tackle the solution of social questions as energetically as is being done in the East.

## Author in This Issue:

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